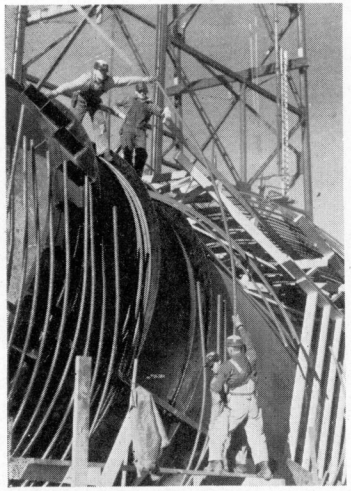
Columbia Basin Project Cost to Total $394,000,000

THE AREA encompassing the Columbia Lava Plateau is one of the two largest lava flows now exposed on the earth's surface. On the plateau are 1,200,000 acres of fertile soil. The plan of irrigating the vast region will be through a network of canals, where a part of the annual run-off from the Columbia will be handled, as the irrigating season coincides with the peak flow of the river. The canal system will be developed as needed to supply nature's necessity to the land, ultimately expected to provide homes for 25,000 to 40,000 new families and similar numbers in towns in the irrigated area, comprising a total of 200,000 to 400,000 persons. The estimated cost of the reclamation work is placed at $208,000,000. The total cost of the project, which will include the reclamation work, finally will amount to $394,000,000 it is estimated. To provide water for the land, a pumping plant will be built near the west end of the dam, within the reservoir basin. Ultimately, 12 pumps (two being regarded as spares) will be installed. Each will have a capacity of 1600 cubic feet per second, with the normal capacity of the plant being 16,000 cubic feet a second, and a single pump will elevate sufficient water to irrigate 120,000 acres of land. Further explanation of the pump capacity would detail each unit as capable of furnishing domestic water requirements of approximately 7,000,000 persons.



The pumps will be arranged to discharge through conduits of 12 feet diameter and 800 feet in length into a canal leading to the balancing reservoir in the Grand Coulee, about two miles distant.

Pumping Units Planned

In the project of reclamation, approximately 980,000 of the 1,200,000 acres to be irrigated will receive water by gravity from the network of canals leading to the south from the balancing reservoir. The remainder of the irrigable land lies about 70 feet above the area where the gravity flow can be obtained. To provide water to this area, auxiliary pumping units will be constructed to serve such plants as the system requires. In addition to the canal distribution system, syphons, wasteways, drainage facilities, headgate structures, and bridges will be needed to round out the reclamation adjuncts. Each will be added as the need requires and the district becomes settled.

As the land in the Columbia Basin is reclaimed during the next 40 or 50 years, it is expected to supplement the wasting agricultural areas, to provide locations for a growing population, and for dispossessed "dust bowl" farmers. Also, a reduction of staple crops is considered by expanding western purchases, rather than by increasing mid-western surpluses.